

EXERCISE BALIKATAN 2002-2

Republic of the Philippines

United States of America

Date: April 25, 2002

FACT SHEET

Exercise Balikatan 2002-2, a Republic of the Philippines/United States combined, joint exercise will be held in the Philippines April 22 through May 6, 2002.

The purpose of the exercise is to improve the Philippines/US combined planning, combat readiness and interoperability. The exercise will also enhance security relations and demonstrate U.S. resolve to support the Philippines against external aggression and state sponsored terrorism through training in joint/combined operations and conduct of other related activities consistent with the Mutual Defense Treaty.

Phase I of Balikatan 2002-2, a Combined Task Force seminar/command post exercise, will be conducted from April 22 through May 4, 2002. This will exercise a Combined Joint Task Force Headquarters Staff and augmentation personnel on crisis action planning and course of action execution at the operational level with a focus on peace enforcement operations. Phase II includes cross training, field training and humanitarian civil assistance exercises from April 22 through May 6, 2002. The cross training and field training portions will enhance the interoperability of U.S. Armed Forces and the Armed Forces of Philippines (AFP). The humanitarian civil assistance will improve U.S./AFP military civic action cooperation while training civil military operators to work together in a Combined Joint Task Force structure with a focus on civil assistance. They will conduct multiple medical, dental, veterinary and engineering civil assistance projects during this phase.

Approximately 2,700 U.S. forces and 2,700 from the Armed Forces of the Philippines are participating. Balikatan 2002-2 is the eighteenth in this series of exercises. The Balikatan series began in 1981. Balikatan, is a tagalog word, meaning "shouldering the load together," and characterizes the intent and philosophy of the combined military effort. The Philippine exercise co-director is Col. Horacio Lactao of the Philippine Army. The U.S. co-director is Marine Col. Brendan P. Kearney.

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UNITS

U.S. units participating in Balikatan 2002-2:

Army

78th Aviation Battalion

Civil-Military Operations Task Force

Air Force

36th Airlift Squadron

204th Airlift Squadron

Navy

USS Fort McHenry

Marine Corps

4th Marine Regiment

31st Marine Expeditionary Unit

Marine Aircraft Group 36

3rd Force Service Support Group

TRAINING VENUES

Training events related to Balikatan 2002-2 will take place in three venues within Luzon: Clark Air Field, Fort Magsaysay, and the vicinity of Cavite.

AIRCRAFT / EQUIPMENT

The following types of aircraft are participating in Exercise Balikatan 2002-2:

AH-1W

CH-46E

CH-53E

UH-1N

CH-53D

KC-130

Exercise Balikatan 2002-2 also involves the use of various engineering assets during Civil Military Operations throughout Cavite.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

U.S. funds allocated for Exercise Balikatan 2002-2 equal approximately \$2 million spread across approximately 20 different vendors.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is this exercise related to the global war on terrorism or to the ongoing counter-terrorism training in the southern Philippines?

No. This is a regularly scheduled exercise that was planned well before September 11. Its scenario does not directly involve counter-terrorism, and it is unrelated to Balikatan 2002-1 in the southern part of the country.

Is this exercise designed to prepare for a specific real-world contingency?

No. This exercise is designed to enhance our general combat readiness, our interoperability, and our preparedness to conduct combined planning.

What is a combined/joint exercise?

A combined exercise involves the forces of more than one nation. A joint exercise involves forces from more than one service of one nation. Therefore, a combined/joint exercise involves several services from more than one country; in this case, the Philippines and U.S.

What is the scenario of Balikatan 2002-2?

The command post exercise event utilizes a multinational peace enforcement and peacekeeping scenario. It begins with U.S. and Philippine forces supervising the withdrawal of belligerent forces, providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and culminates with turning over operations to U.N. peacekeeping authorities.

Can media representatives cover the exercise?

Yes. Interested media representatives should contact the Combined Joint Information Bureau (CJIB) during the exercise at exercisewebmaster@mcbbutler.usmc.mil.

What humanitarian/civic projects are planned for Balikatan 2002-2?

There are several humanitarian and civic assistance projects scheduled by both Philippine and American forces. These include veterinary and dental teams providing free clinics, and engineering projects designed to improve the local infrastructure.

Are you concerned about possible threats from the Abu Sayyaf group or any other terrorist organizations in the Philippines?

We take force protection very seriously, and we have implemented comprehensive measures to ensure security of our personnel. It would not be appropriate to discuss specific details of our force protection measures.

Is the exercise being held near the Spratly Islands?

The exercise is held on the island of Luzon.

Will the U.S. troops have liberty or leave during the exercise? If so, where will they have leave?

There may be an opportunity for some participants to go on liberty in the vicinity of their assigned exercise support sites. Locations for pass/liberty activities have not been finalized. Any such activities will be carefully planned, coordinated and supervised.

The government of the Philippines is calling the counterterrorism training in the southern Philippines, Balikatan. Can you explain the difference?

Exercise Balikatan is the term we have both used to describe this annual bilateral exercise that takes place every spring. The government of the Philippines is using the term Balikatan 2002-1 to describe the counter-terrorism training effort in the southern Philippines. Therefore we are terming this exercise "Balikatan 2002-2." The two events are separate and unrelated.

Is there an interest by the U.S. in reestablishing permanent bases in the Republic of the Philippines?

No. We have no plans to establish any permanent presence in the Philippines.

Doesn't the presence of so many us troops violate Government of Philippines law precluding foreign troops being based on their soil?

U.S. forces are not going to be based in the Philippines; they will be on temporary duty. Therefore, the deployment of U.S. forces does not violate any laws or the Philippine constitution.

What is the purpose of the artillery training?

The purpose of 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment conducting exercises is to maintain operational readiness. The Philippines is one of the sites where our artillery Marines are able to sustain their firing skills.

What measures are being taken to prevent stray artillery rounds from impacting on private land?

Artillery training is always conducted under the strictest guidelines. Range regulations and extensive safety procedures provide our Marines with strict rules to ensure safe and accurate fire within the range.

What is the Austal Westpac Express and is it a warship?

This ship is not a warship. It is a leased vessel used for administrative transportation of personnel, equipment and supplies from Okinawa to training areas in the Pacific region. The High Speed Vehicle (HSV) will be used to transport Marines and their equipment, such as vehicles and cargo.

Why are U.S. Navy or Military Sealift Command ships not transporting personnel to the exercise?

The High Speed Vessel (HSV) complements the amphibious ships of the U.S. Navy. However, the amphibious Navy ships stationed in the Pacific under Commander 7th fleet are primarily dedicated to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. Military Sealift Command provides ocean transportation of equipment, fuel, supplies and ammunition to sustain U.S. forces worldwide during peacetime and in war. The ships of MSC are already loaded with supplies and equipment, and are not used to transport troops. Furthermore, other ships cannot match the 35-42 knot speed of the HSV.

CJIB CONTACT INFORMATION

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